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The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Stylish and Sophisticated
A local woman follows her life-long dream and opens a women's fashion boutique near Cary Memorial Library.
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Fine-tuned Musicians
The annual concerto concert proved surprising for the audience as both students and faculty pick up instruments.
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Volume LIV Issue IV— April 2013

Changing clocks bring confusion, relief

■ Catherine Qin
Editor-in-Chief

The clocks at Lexington High School are known for being notoriously inconsistent — at times nearly three minutes fast, at others one minute slow. But what goes on behind the fickle faces of those ticking time machines on the walls?

The clocks, bells, intercom and phones are all interlinked in one communication system at LHS. Though the technology falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works and the town contracts the company Business Communications Systems for technical maintenance, it is Dean David Lautman who monitors and resets the clocks when they run awry. He bases school time off of his Nextel service cell phone. Every so often, Lautman must reprogram the clocks to correct drifting time or adjust the bells to fit special block schedules, such as MCAS days.

"I happened to have come here so long ago that I know how to fix things," said Lautman. "So when things go wrong, I step in and try to fix them, or when there needs to be a new bell schedule put in, I'll take care of that."

The program Lautman operates "was probably 10 years obsolete when it was put in in 2000," he said. "It's running on a Windows 2005 computer, so it's pretty old."

However, Lautman has not always been the clock master. He inherited the responsibility from David Nedzel, a former LHS student and MIT graduate who ran the clock system from the time the 2000-2003 school renovations were completed until his graduation in 2003. Nedzel had inherited the job from Olga Guttag, a local parent who volunteered frequently in the school community.

With such obsolete technology, it is a common occurrence at LHS to see clock hands at a standstill, or whirring uncontrollably through hours in a matter of seconds.

"The program is designed to synchronize all the clocks to the same time, and sometimes they get a signal from the tower and sometimes they don't," said Lautman.

In recent months, students have noticed a shift from school clocks ticking two minutes ahead of real time to one minute behind real time.

"I hate it when the clocks don't work," said Becky Ngo, a senior. "I understand some people don't have time to fix it. It would be helpful if they did fix it, because I have to get to class and I don't want to be tardy."

While some are irked, others have been helped.

"Since the change, I've definitely been on time more often, which is less disruptive to the class," Victor Porras, a senior, wrote in an email. "I really don't think about the difference much unless I walk in at 7:46 on my watch and realize that the second bell hasn't rung."

Lautman revealed the method behind this madness.

"I'll set them to exact Nextel time and they'll drift away from the bells so that the bells will ring at the right

[CLOCKS, page 6]

Staff photo by Susie Kim

Harlem Shake — On March 1, students paused on their way to H block to watch a Harlem Shake dance mob unfold in the Quad. An assortment of eccentric props were brought onto the scene, including a hot dog costume and a pink stuffed pony.

The event was part of a wider cultural phenomenon inspired by a plethora of YouTube videos depicting people shaking their bodies unrestrainedly to the song "Harlem Shake" by Baauer.

The LHS Harlem Shake was organized by senior Raffah Siddiqui, along with fellow seniors Bruno Costa and Simon Schneider, and was pre-approved by the administration. "Various other high schools did it," said Siddiqui, "so why not Lexington?"

However, despite students' anticipation, the dance itself failed to rally the large body of onlookers to join. Siddiqui believed this disappointment was because of inadequate planning and a lack of willing participants. "The people that danced did great though," he said. Timi Bennatan, a junior who participated, said the dancers "went hard."

Pictured are Kim Rodrig (senior) and Dan Finch (senior)
(By Erin Lee)

GSA hosts first dance since end of school ban

■ Jungwan Kim
Staff Writer

Lexington High School's annual GSA Halloween Dance took place on Mar. 1 in Commons II as the first school-sponsored dance since the dance ban ended.

"We had a strong belief that we could come to a compromise before that dance actually took place, so we didn't cancel that one," said Adam Goldberg, associate principal. "We had made the decision to communicate; this is where we are. It was never our intention to forever eliminate dances."

Formerly known as the Gay-Straight Alliance, the Gender and Sexuality Alliance has hosted this dance on Halloween for the past 16 years. It was postponed because of the dance ban.

The dance's goal is to provide a safe space for students to have fun without feeling judged. Throughout its history, it has been incident-free.

Still, the school took some precautionary measures to make sure problems at past LHS dances would not recur.

"We talked about a different kind of training for our staff, who want to volunteer to be chaperones, so they felt better equipped as to how

[GSA, page 6]

Jazz Ensemble to honor Ellington at international music competition

■ Katie Chen
Staff Writer

Lexington High School's Jazz Ensemble was selected as one of the top 15 jazz bands in North America to perform at the 2013 Essentially Ellington Competition & Festival at Lincoln Center in May.

Jazz Ensemble is LHS' audition-only big band, composed of saxophones, trumpets, trombones, piano, guitar, bass guitar and drums. The members will visit New York City from May 10 to 12, where they will participate in workshops with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and other distinguished musicians. They will also compete against the other 14 finalists for the opportunity to perform in a public concert on the festival's final night with the JLCO.

Essentially Ellington is hosted by Jazz at Lincoln Center in honor of legendary jazz artist Duke Ellington, who composed more than 3,000 pieces and gave more than 20,000 performances throughout his entire career. The goal of the competition is to perform Ellington repertoire true to the sound and style of his original recordings.

"Music has come so far, and this is old music, so you have to learn how they played back then, rather than play with the more modern style distinctive of high-level musicians now," said Noah Harrington, a sophomore and bass guitarist.

Jazz Ensemble's preparation for Essentially Ellington began in November, with three-hour rehearsals after school every Monday and Thursday. After months of practice, the Ensemble submitted recordings of its repertoire to the competition in January and received an invitation over February break to perform at the festival in May.

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Should seniors have yearlong English classes?

^^^ YES (above)
NO (right) >>>

■ Jackie Kong
Staff Writer

Effective next year, the English department at Lexington High School has chosen to adjust senior English electives from semester to yearlong — a choice well-made.

Because of the semester timeline, senior English classes over the past two years could not cover their subjects in as much depth and breadth as possible. Changing all classes back to yearlong courses will allow students to delve into the subject that they choose to study and develop a knowledge of the subject that would certainly not have been possible if they had only studied it for one semester. Without the need to rush through topics, students can read much more text for the course over the extended period of time.

A yearlong English course also fosters stronger student-teacher relationships, which are crucial to a successful school year and even more important to having a memorable senior year experience. As students, we are accustomed to getting to know a teacher's teaching style as the quarters progress; I have found that the teachers I am closest to are the teachers I have known for a year or more. A yearlong English class allows seniors to develop lasting and meaningful relationships with their classmates as they finish their final year at LHS.

More importantly, strong student-teacher relationships can help ward off the notorious "senior slump," when seniors fall out of their first semester work ethic after handing in their college applications. In current second semester English courses, many seniors don't put in as much work into a class as they would've first semester, and for a good reason. What senior doesn't want the chance to relax? Consequently, given a new course halfway through their final year of high school, seniors likely approach the class with a whole different outlook than that of the beginning of the year. They have no incentive to work as hard, and

[YES, page 7]

■ Christine Kim
Staff Writer

As students begin to think about next year, Lexington High School traditionally offers rising seniors more options for English classes than in previous years. However, these senior English electives will soon become full year courses, a regression from the semester options LHS has offered seniors in the past two years. In order to offer the yearlong courses, the English department cut and consolidated many electives. This comes as a bitter disappointment for rising seniors who had expected more choices and freedom during their final year of high school.

Despite looking forward to a yearlong course next year, Zachary Del Nero, who teaches Dystopias, said, "students might not have as much variety as they want their senior year in terms of the texts they study."

Although yearlong classes may provide a chance to go more in depth in a specific topic, many seniors want the chance to experience the varied material that different courses cover. Previous semester courses offered a total of 16 different electives; this selection has now been decreased to only nine full-year courses. The decision suppresses students' desire to choose from a wide range of English classes that truly pertain to their interests.

Senior year stands out from previous high school years with its focus on college and the future. Semester English classes provide a transition from yearlong high school classes to the semester classes that are typical in college.

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JV History Bowl team advances to nationals

■ Michael Heyang
Staff Writer

Lexington High School's History Bowl team hosted and competed in the New England History Bowl Championships on March 9.

LHS' JV team earned a bid to compete at the National History Bowl Championship April 27 to 28 in Washington, D.C. The varsity team did not compete, as some were unavailable because of the Regional Science Bowl.

"Hosting the tournament is great because it allows us to send teams without having to pay," said Arjun Sarathy, a sophomore and co-captain of the JV team. "That means more people will be able to practice for the National Championship."

The team, composed of Sarathy, co-captain freshman Duncan McCallum and freshmen Reggie Luo, Devin Shang and Will Marshall, advanced to the semifinals before losing to Hingham.

"It felt good to have advanced to semis," said Sarathy, "but we were really hoping for better. Then again, we were JV [at the state] tournament and won, but we didn't think we could repeat our success, much less in a higher division."

Courtesy of Pavitra Chari

Co-captains Duncan McCallum, a freshman, and Arjun Sarathy, a sophomore and members Will Marshall, a freshman; Devin Shang, a freshman, and Reggie Luo, a freshman, not pictured, of the History Bowl JV team that advanced to the semifinals in the New England History Bowl Regional Championships hosted at LHS on March 9.

Earlier in January, both the JV and varsity teams swept the Massachusetts State History Bowl. Individual members McCallum and Patrick Neal won the JV and varsity titles, respectively, in the History Bee Championships.

The team's strong showing in this year's New England Championships, along with the state tournament, gives members hope for next year's continued success.

"When the seniors leave LHS, we feel that this performance shows that the club will be going strong so long as the younger kids are willing to put in the time and effort to get better," said Brandon Nguyen, a senior and varsity team captain. "Our team ended up making semifinals, showing that they are a force to be reckoned with in the Massachusetts area."

Stress levels at LHS appear to be declining —

Lexington High School students sat down in a 25-minute extended homeroom to fill out the Youth Risk Behavior Survey on March 26.

Though this year's results will not be released until next winter, previous years' surveys indicate stress levels may be on a downward trend. Over 92 percent of students reported being under stress because of classes in 2011, compared with 95 percent in 2009.

The purpose of the survey is to gauge risky student behavior, said Jennifer Wolfrum, coordinator of health education at LHS.

Originally created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the YRBS is administered every other year to random school districts across the country. After being selected as one of the schools in 1995, LHS decided to administer the survey to its students every year, regardless of its selection. The survey's length increases each year as the school administration finds new questions to ask. In 2011, it consisted of 99 questions.

The survey's results are sent to Northeastern University where Jack McDevitt, associate dean of the College of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, and Dr. Amy Farrell, assistant professor in the College of Criminal Justice, analyze the results.

According to the 2011 survey, 78 percent of students reported drinking alcohol in their lifetime, the same percentage as reported in 2009. 89 percent of students reported being harassed in school, while 83 percent of students reported that they can depend on family and friends for support.

"Overall, the biggest issue is academic stress," said Wolfrum.

"We've tried many things," said Wolfrum. "We've been trying to add in more relaxation techniques during health class, and last year we added a big display on stress."

(By Soumya Ram)

Lexington residents celebrate history and culture at 300th Incorporation Weekend event

■ Mayuhka Karnam
Staff Writer

In honor of the 300th anniversary of Lexington's founding as a town, LexCelebrate Incorporation Weekend was held at Lexington High School on March 16 and 17.

The motto of the celebration was to "Discover our roots — and see how we've grown!" visualized through the symbol of a tree. The event's theme was following the progression of Lexington from a 17th-century farming society to the technologically savvy community it is today.

The weekend celebrations were introduced by state senators Mike Barrett and Ken Donnelly. The State Senate issued a proclamation congratulating Lexington on 300 years as a town.

Several of the Lexington 300th Anniversary committees organized the weekend's events. The Events Committee, chaired by Jessie Steigerwald and Tanya Morrisett, the Incorporation Day Committee, led by co-chairs Betty Gau, Donna Burns and Polly Kienle, and the Dance around the World Committee planned Saturday night's town dance.

The idea for the Incorporation Day Celebration was conceived about a year and a half ago. The committee was formed shortly thereafter to begin planning and preparing for the event. Committee members described organizing the celebration as a fulfilling experience.

"We started out with nothing and we've built such a huge event, so that's been really fun and interesting," Gau said.

The weekend's festivities boasted a variety of activities that mirrored Lexington's diverse community, including artisan demonstrations, panels featuring local authors and speakers, a cultural dance celebrating Chinese, Indian, Latino, Israeli and Scottish traditions and an eighth grade Mock Town Meeting. Residents also had the opportuni-

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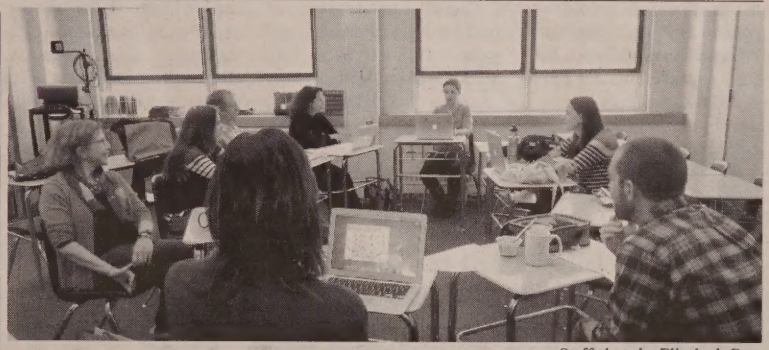

Staff photo by Elizabeth Case

Junior English teachers engage in discussion during professional development on March 7.

Teachers discuss curriculum, changes at professional development day workshops

■ Mandy Quan
Staff Writer

On March 7, Lexington High School teachers crowded around desks and tables, hurrying to finish their salads and sandwiches. It was a half-day for the students, but for teachers, professional development day was about to begin. On the agenda: discussing changes that need to be made in order to improve LHS students' overall learning experience.

Teachers were grouped by subject, course and grade level. Each group spent the day constructing different approaches to improve their teaching methods to enhance student learning.

There was an air of diligence present in the cluttered classrooms as teachers voiced their opinions. American Literature teachers spent their meeting planning out their curriculum for the year.

"Our goal today is to see what tasks we can complete by the end of the year, nail down those tasks, and try to plan the rest of our year," said Rosemary Loomis, an English teacher who also teaches Memoir and Nature Writing.

In the health department, faculty members decided the best way to help students improve their studies was to teach them methods of stress management. Shiv Laundleer, an LHS graduate, was invited to the professional development day workshop to present on meditation.

Valerie Aloi, a health teacher, said, "The goal for health teachers is to help the overall stress issue here at the high school and help students find ways to manage the stress they face by incorporating [the skills] not only in health classes, but to use them in other classes, too."

[PROFESSIONAL, page 7]

Students from other countries adapt to LHS environment

■ Grace Wu
Staff Writer

As Lexington prides itself on the diversity of its residents' backgrounds, Lexington High School is home to many students who have moved from countries as far as Saudi Arabia and Brazil, having to adjust to a new school, new country and new environment during their high school years.

One student is Nur Akkurt, a senior who moved from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in the summer of 2010. She was born in the United States and lived in the United States until fourth grade, when she moved to Dhahran.

For her, returning to the United States was a welcome change.

"It was actually a very pleasant experience to come to a place where you have freedom of expression and a lot of privileges that you didn't have before," she said.

In Saudi Arabia, ideas such as freedom of speech and women's rights, considered basic civil rights in the U.S., were restricted in their definitions, said Akkurt.

"Basically everything you had access to was limited," she said.

In Dhahran, Akkurt attended an international school, with only 100 students per grade. The switch to a larger student body was thus overwhelming, but Akkurt quickly immersed herself in her new environment.

"One thing I tried to make a point to do was take more social risks," she said. "In junior year I took up the French horn, which seemed like a bad decision, but it's actually the best decision I ever made, because it's something I could get better at and I also met a lot of amazing people because of it."

Michelle Chong, a freshman, is another student who came to LHS from abroad, moving this past summer from Hong Kong. Similar to Akkurt, she was born in Boston and lived in the United States before moving abroad.

She noted the difference between the environment of the big city versus that of a quiet suburb.

"There is a much more diverse range of people in Hong Kong," she said. "The atmosphere is more dynamic; change is constant. Life is not as animated here."

Though Chong misses the tight-knit community and greater freedom of her old school in Hong Kong, she appreciates Lexington's ability to challenge its students.

"It is a very academically stimulating environment," she said.

Aside from language, the cultural difference that struck Aliati most was the contrasting mentalities of Brazilians and Americans.

"Here people are more focused, and in Brazil it's more laid back," he said.

Valdir Aliati, a senior, moved to the United States from Brazil the summer after his freshman year. Unlike Akkurt and Chong, he had never lived in the U.S. before, so learning English presented a significant challenge.

Although the initial language barrier was difficult to overcome, Aliati found that simply being surrounded by the English language and being required to speak it allowed him to learn more quickly.

"It kind of forced me to learn English," he said.

Learning the language also helped him meet new people. Aliati said he made his first friends "through ESL class. Then [in] my junior year, I joined the football team, which helped a lot."

Akkurt, Chong and Aliati are only three among many LHS students who have experienced life and school outside of the U.S. Though their experiences and opinions vary, all three have learned to adapt to their new home.

A cappella groups impress at Jam despite time constraints

■ Andrea Michaelson
Staff Writer

The annual Winter Jamboree concert enjoyed a huge turnout on March 9 as Lexington High School students and families came to hear the school's seven a cappella groups and the special guests of the night, The Duke's Men of Yale University.

The strong a cappella program, sponsored by the performing arts department, is a long-held tradition at LHS and has gained much positive attention from the student body over the years.

"It's great seeing everyone's hard work pay off in such amazing performances," said Jordan Silverman, a sophomore audience member.

The event was organized and run mostly by students. Choral director Jason Iannuzzi oversees the a cappella program with a hands-off approach to allow students to exercise leadership skills.

"The kids really love to show off what they can do," he said.

Winter Jam carries a reputation among a cappella students as a notoriously hasty concert.

"Winter Jams are always a bit of a crunch with singing valentines, December break and February break all eating up rehearsal time, but it's always great to see all the groups pull it together in spite of the time constraints," said Russell Gens, a senior and leader of the all-male group Pitchpipes.

Despite the tight prepara-

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Staff photo by Anar Kansara

A set of chairs face the curtained changing rooms in Petra, the new women's clothing store in Lexington Center.

Petra Hoffmann opens new women's boutique in center

■ Ayesha Harisinghani
Staff Writer

Petra, a women's fashion boutique, opened at 1844 Massachusetts Ave. near Cary Memorial Library. Replacing the Greater Boston Running Company shop, Petra sells clothing and accessories.

Petra Hoffmann, the boutique's owner, came up with the business idea after her parents moved to Lexington.

"I just saw such a void," she said. "Because Lexington is such an amazing town, it was really shocking that there wasn't a store for women here."

Hoffmann has loved fashion and wanted to open a store since she was a young girl. She said Petra was a "long time coming," with several obstacles along the way.

"The hardest thing, I think, after [getting] approved by a bank for a loan is having someone in Lexington [to] take me seriously," said Hoffmann.

Yet Hoffmann firmly believes that "everything happens for a reason," and she is happy with the landlords and location of her store. Though her current focus is the Lexington area, she hopes to open a store in Nantucket.

While Hoffman's pitch is women's clothing, she emphasized that there is something for every woman in her store.

"It's definitely women's clothing, but it's all women," she said. "I have clients from

[PETRA, page 7]

collegebored

Life is full of rejections, but persevere because victory will be yours

■ Matt Lee
Columnist

There's a certain feeling you get before opening an envelope. Maybe this was what it was like for our parents or grandparents, when the post office really did run 24/7, 365. What could the letter hold? Will it bear bad news or good?

What if it's bad news? Important college mail means the difference between a plan or a lack of one, and could determine what'll happen in years to come. College is, for most seniors, going to be life for the next four years. Underclassmen, savor high school. It goes fast, though. It may not feel like it when you're languidly drudging through AP Whatchamacallit class (which is all about the test—you shouldn't have settled for AP instead of honors. You know that).

Okay, at this point, admit it — you're thinking, "Matt! Is that nostalgia I'm hearing?" or perhaps, "Get back to the point. You were talking about letters. I mean, my lord, where was that going?"

Very soon, if not already, seniors will figure out just what is to become of them next year. Many don't, and while the waiting and not knowing is monotonous and scary, getting a rejection letter is no picnic either.

Did you get rejected from your top choice? Everyone's going to tell you, "If they didn't want you, then you didn't want them!" But you did want to go to that school. You carefully vetted and researched that place for months. You wrote essay after essay to show them who you were. And they sent you a letter or an email telling you no. That might just be worse than a break-up by text. (Probably not worse than a breakup by SnapChat, though. That would be cruel and unusual.)

So what I'm going to tell you is: Life is full of defeat. It's full of victory, too. Handle these setbacks like any other — accept them, and move on. Admit that you wanted to go there, admit that you wanted that scholarship, admit that that was your goal and you didn't reach it. Accept that. And realize that a victory is around the corner.

Most Americans get some kind of degree in their lifetime, and there are thousands of colleges in the U.S., so don't fret. It might not be Yale (or, knowing LHS, it might be ...) but you'll find a place that you love, a place that you'll have a whopping four years at. Keep that in mind, and seniors, remember — it's second semester; live a little.

Orchestra performs concerto, overture with great finesse

■ Sarah Zhang
Staff Writer

Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Clark Ikezu, a senior and member of Chamber Orchestra, and Sam Huang, a sophomore and member of Repertoire Orchestra, play violin in a small ensemble at the Concerto Concert on March 12.

On March 12, Lexington High School was filled with the sounds of string and wind instruments alike. Among the mixture of sounds was the chatter of nervous students as they frantically prepared for the annual concerto concert.

Janet Haas, conductor of the Repertoire and Chamber Orchestras, strode through the hallways, making last-minute checks on student players before entering the auditorium to greet the audience. Meanwhile, students in black hurriedly ran through their pieces one last time.

Haas described the concerto concert as "a box of chocolates: you never know what you're going to get until you play each piece."

The concert opened with a clarinet quintet performing chamber music.

Then, featured piano soloist and senior Kyu Il Lee, who won the annual concerto competition in December, took to the stage to perform Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor. His piano skills were astonishing as the notes drifted from the keyboard and rippled through the auditorium expressively, without any apparent mistake.

The somber melody was magnificent and stirring. Lee and the orchestra played together seamlessly and the students' concentration on the finer mechanics of the piece was evident from the intense concentration on their faces.

After the tumultuous applause for Lee's outstanding performance faded, Haas introduced the final piece of the night, Tchaikovsky's classic 1812 Overture, op. 49, conducted by Petar Ojdrovic, a senior and bassist. To my surprise, after surrendering the conductor's podium to Ojdrovic, Haas walked back to the double bass section of the orchestra and picked up a bass herself.

Driven by the bright and triumphant sounds of the brass fanfare, the Overture was inspiring and filled with poignant emotion. As the piece wound to its climax, I was bombarded with the sudden, booming crash of drums, resembling victorious cannons.

When the last note of the piece had faded, the entire auditorium, myself included, erupted into applause as we gave the orchestra a standing ovation.

The entire orchestra rose up for a uniform bow before departing. Even after they left, audience members continued to praise the performance.

"It was so wonderful, it brought tears to my eyes," said Keith Wharton, whose daughters senior Veronica and sophomore Naomi played oboe and French horn, respectively, in the concert.

Haas, too, was pleased with the success of the concert.

"I thought it went really well," she wrote in an email. "[Lee] was a wonderful musician to work with and his piece gave the orchestra a chance to learn a different movement of a piece they had performed in the fall. [Ojdrovic's] work with [the] orchestra on Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture was

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Alumni Flashback: Grossman recounts challenges, lessons gleaned from LHS education

■ Lev Grossman
Guest Columnist
Class of 1987

When I was asked to write about how going to Lexington High School influenced my life and my career, I immediately thought, this is one of those situations where I should probably tell the truth. So I will. Even though it's not all pretty.

I graduated from LHS a million years ago in 1987. I've published four novels, two of which, "The Magicians" and "The Magician King," were New York Times best sellers. For the past 11 years, I've worked at Time magazine, where I review books and write about technology.

How did LHS help me get here today? It got me into college. LHS is good at that; not all schools are. I went to Harvard, but I'm sure if I had gone to another high school I could just as likely have not gotten in. And Harvard gave me a lot of opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise.

Most of what I learned in class I never thought about again. I slaved away in high school. But most of it was like a booster stage on a rocket. I got the grades, I got the scores, I got into college — and then it all dropped away, tumbling through space, burning up in the atmosphere, the wreckage landing somewhere in the Adriatic Sea never to be heard from again.

There are exceptions. I had a social studies teacher, Mr. Karras, who forced me to organize my writing into coherent structures. They were weird structures you'd never use in professional or personal writing, but structure is half the battle, and you have to learn to use it. He taught me that, and he did it well.

French turned out to be important, too. When I try to order wine at a restaurant I am grateful for my time at LHS.

You'd think that as a writer, English class would have been important, but studying literature in high school was very different from studying it in college. I read six novels by John Steinbeck at LHS, identifying major themes and conflicts. But in the real world, nobody cares about John Steinbeck or themes and conflicts anymore. College was where I found the writers who matter to me — Joyce, Woolf, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Nabokov — and learned how to read them. I didn't realize it then, but in high

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LHS students continue cultural exchange with sister school in France

■ Emily Hu
Staff Writer

Continuing a 25-year-long tradition, 12 Lexington High School students packed their bags on Feb. 7 and headed off for a two-and-a-half-week trip to Lexington's sister city, Antony, France, as part of the annual French exchange program.

Students had the opportunity to stay with their respective "corres," or French host students, in Lycee Descartes, a French high school in Antony, a city 20 minutes away from Paris.

The exchange program's application process began as early as spring of last year when prospective participants began filling out forms and undergoing interviews. After being selected, each student was assigned a corres to host at their own homes in October.

While in Paris, LHS students shadowed their corres and were able to take classes at Lycee Descartes as well as give presentations to English classes on popular cultural topics such as American slang, fashion and music. These presentations were the culmination of weeks of preparation and research by the LHS students on American society and tradition.

In addition to experiencing everyday school life, students also explored France as tourists, visiting popular monuments such as the Eiffel Tower, munching on French crepes, relaxing on the banks of La Seine and window-shopping at local boutiques.

The students spent the last days of their trip in Brussels, Belgium, where they visited well-known monuments such as the Grand Place and the statue of Manneken Pis.

However, the tourist experience was not the main focus.

"I valued being included in a French family and getting to see culture on such a personal level," said Hannah Resnick, a senior.

Rina Farber-Mazor, a French teacher who participated in the exchange in past years, echoed these sentiments.

"The exchange is so valuable because it is unlike any other foreign travel experience," she wrote in an email. "French society is typically very closed to outsiders, but an exchange offers students a way to be accepted into a French family and a French group of friends that takes years [to build] once you are older. And those relationships last forever."

Courtesy of Megan Vanderhooft

Evan Tarrh, a senior and participant in the French exchange program, walks alongside the evening display of the Eiffel Tower.

LHS Student Achievements

Varsity and JV teams both won their respective divisions at the Massachusetts State History Bowl.

Lexington A & B science bowl teams placed first and second for northern region at the New England Super Regional Science Bowl. (A team is advancing to Nationals in Washington D.C.)

17 LHS students are advancing to the National History Day regional competition on March 2, which will be in Winchester, MA.

National Oceanic Science Bowl Lexington A won the Blue Lobster Bowl (regionals competition) and is going to nationals in Milwaukee in April.

Congratulations to everyone!

26 students (20 projects) are advancing to the State Science Fair; Benjamin Brown, a senior, qualified for International Science and Engineering Fair.

Noha Yehia, a sophomore, won LHS Poetry OutLoud contest and competed in regionals on March 2.

Surya Bhupatiraju, a senior, is a 2013 Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist (out of 300 semifinalists).

How do YOU spend your MCAS frees?

"Film my Romeo and Juliet play."
— Devin Shang, freshman

"Go out to breakfast with friends!"
— Monisha Reginald, senior

"Robotics, or sleep in."
— Xyla Foxlin, junior

CLOCKS - PAGE 1

time but the clocks will be two minutes fast or slow," he said. "When I get a chance, I'll sneak in after school and try to re-synchronize the clocks to the bells. The changes happen at midnight."

Lautman added that he sets the clocks one minute slow in the interest of student safety.

"What I usually try to do is set the clocks one minute slow. I'd much rather have kids run in — it's already chaos out there — and just be on time then have them run in and be two minutes late with the clocks being fast. But then it drifts to right on time, and then it drifts two minutes fast. When I notice it's a couple minutes fast, I run back and reprogram it."

Until the town updates school time technology, inconsistent clocks are an inevitable reality that students and staff will have to cope with.

"We're a school," said Lautman. "Are you going to spend money on books and kids, or the bells [and clocks]? Eh ... books and kids."

(Ellen Meyers contributed to reporting.)

GSA - PAGE 1

to respond to different situations on the dance floor," said Goldberg.

As expected, the dance went smoothly. Organizers and attendees noted an open and relaxing environment.

Melissa Buttaro, GSA advisor and guidance counselor, said that her favorite aspect of the dance was "watching everyone have a blast without feeling judged" for their sexual orientation or for how they looked.

Oscar Oliveira Soens, a sophomore who attended the dance, echoed these thoughts. "Everyone was dancing and having a good time."

Though the event took place later in the year than usual, the traditional Halloween theme remained standing.

"My favorite part was getting to dress up in a goofy costume," said Oliveira Soens. "My best friend and I dressed up as Cosmo and Wanda from the Fairly OddParents and we looked super cool."

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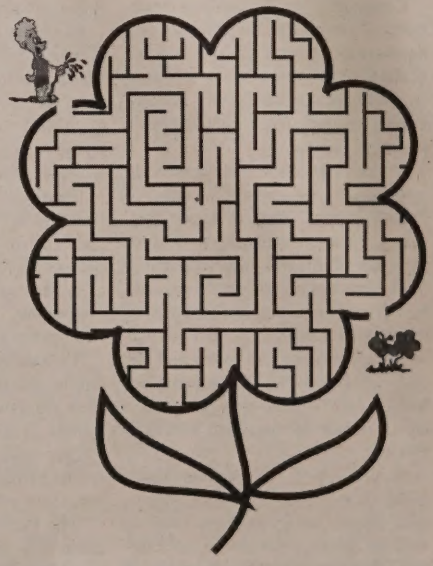
April Showers Bring May Flowers



http://www.printactivities.com

JAZZ - PAGE 1

Members agreed that while the music itself was easy, mimicking the style of the original Duke Ellington recordings required hours of hard work. Solos had to to be improvised and practiced. All members had to be able to play their part perfectly and precisely in time with each other in order to have productive rehearsals.

"A lot of my practice for this music is just listening to the recordings they do," said Garrett Parrish, a senior and drummer. "My practices carry over to everything. I have to play my passages right every time."

Despite their aim for perfectionism, the opportunity to play the music of Ellington is more important to Jazz Ensemble members than winning itself.

"The main benefit I wanted to get out of this was to play this music by an American master," said Andrew Held, director of Jazz Ensemble. "Winning this competition is secondary for me."

Senior and guitarist Chris Xu agreed. "Music is not competition. I do not care if we win or not. It's a great honor just to be playing the music of one of the greatest and most influential jazz musicians of all time," he said.

YES - PAGE 2

this is ultimately unfair to the teachers, who are not regarded with the same respect or attention as in first semester.

On the other hand, there may be some students who are excited about taking their second semester English course. It is unfair to those students who want to learn if the majority of their peers are completely disinterested from the moment the course begins.

The decision to revert back to yearlong senior English classes is thus beneficial to not only students, but also the English department overall. While there is a measure of excitement and freedom in having semester-long courses, ultimately, full year courses allow students to truly delve into their learning and forge meaningful classroom relationships with their peers and teachers.

NO - PAGE 2

With continued semester classes, senior students become familiar with the college course experience and begin to discover the interests and strengths that can help define their college years and beyond. The short amount of time of each class, which is often seen as a disadvantage, pushes students to succeed in a smaller time window, preparing study habits that will be vital in the years to come.

"One of the things we were trying to do in creating a semester-long course is to give seniors a class that feels like a college level course in terms of the structure and the length and time period," said David Walsh, who teaches Dystopias.

Despite reasons for the new change, the removal of semester electives will inevitably make senior year more like every other year in high school. With few choices and fewer freedoms, the English department's decision to revert to full year courses is undeniably a step backward for our intellectually curious and independent seniors.

LEX300 - PAGE 3

ty to contribute photos to the Mass. Memories Road Show and add suggestions to the town time capsule, which will be opened in 50 years.

With so many activities, participants noted the lively atmosphere of the gathering.

The weekend was "festive and there was something for all ages," said Charlotte Evans, a Lexington resident.

CORRECTION:

In the article "Dance committee replaces ban with safety contract policy," Alan Bartels was the Senate representative, not Aren Torikian. Also, there will not be a breathalyzer test or a required signature on a safety pledge at dances this year.

PROFESSIONAL - PAGE 3

Physics teachers cracked inside jokes over lunch before discussing their courses.

"We were trying to come to a decision collaboratively about what the big ideas were and the important things we thought the students [should] walk away with at the end of the course," said Jacalyn Crowe, a physics teacher. "We will put all that together to the redevelopment of this course."

The faculty found this program to be effective and liked the longer intervals to work within their discipline groups.

"It's good to have extended times. In the times we can meet [for more than] an hour, it's nice," said Crowe.

(Elizabeth Case contributed to reporting.

JAM - PAGE 4

tion period, Winter Jam was an undeniable success. From Mixed Nuts' lively performance of Sara Bareilles' "Gonna Get Over You," soloed by sophomore Emily Tan, to crowd favorite Pitchpipes' set, featuring sophomore Noah Virgile's soulful rendition of "I Can't Make You Love Me" by Bonnie Raitt, every number brought down the house.

While audience members savored each song, singers described the performance as gratifying as well.

"Soloing at Jam was a little scary at first, but it was so rewarding for me to see my friends and family supporting me from the audience," said Tan.

"The feeling of being able to sing out and have your group be right behind you to support you is one of the most amazing feelings a performer can have," added Virgile.

So it seemed after months of sore chops and squeezed-in rehearsals, both audience members and performers delighted in yet another memorable Jam.

Giving voice to the sentiments of her fellow a cappella singers, senior Michal Clayton of Guacamole said, "In the end it always seems to work out. I love my group, and that's all the motivation I need to give it my all every single time."

PETRA - PAGE 4

their 30s to way into their 70s and everything in between. I have sizes from 0 to 18, I have jeans and T-shirts and then I have dressy dresses. So really it's for everybody, and it was important for me to hit everyone, every lifestyle, every size, everything."

Despite the wide selection offered, prospective shoppers are skeptical of how Petra will fare compared to past clothing stores in the area.

"I'd be interested to know what type of clothes they sell because Jasmine Sola and 344 sold higher-end clothes and didn't do too well," wrote Sarah Garberg, a junior, in an email.

Others are excited about the convenient location.

"I think that having a women's shop in the center [is] extremely beneficial and useful," wrote senior Margaret Chuang in an email. "It was great to have 344 to stop by after school with friends until it closed. I look forward to be[ing] able to have somewhere to shop in the near future!"

ALUMNI - PAGE 5

school my literary education hadn't even started yet.

Maybe the most important thing I learned in high school was what I was good at and what I wasn't. After LHS, you'll never be forced to spend so much time doing things you're bad at. I learned I liked math and physics, but as hard as I tried I was never going to make a difference with them. I learned I could play the cello, sort of, but I couldn't sing. I learned I crushed at badminton, but sucked at soccer.

And I learned that I could write. Before LHS, it never even crossed my mind that I was good at writing. I didn't even understand that you could be good at it. But I won a couple of prizes for writing in my junior year, and that's when I realized it was a skill like anything else.

It wasn't till years later I figured out I could make a career out of writing. I graduated from LHS in 1987, and college in 1991, but I didn't get paid for a piece of writing till 1998. But the first clue to where I was going arrived when I was at LHS. I could have saved myself a lot of time if I paid attention.

So pay attention to that stuff. And go to French, too. You'll thank me later.

Lev Grossman is the author of four books and a writer for Time Magazine.

CORRECTION:

The article "Students juggle workload with extracurriculars to teach younger students" on page 8 was written by Serena Hajjar and Richard Huang, not Hannah Kwon. The article "Offbeat Athlete: Keya You shows discipline through taekwondo" also on page 8 was written by Hannah Kwon, not Serena Hajjar and Richard Huang.

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CONCERTO - PAGE 5

great, and everyone enjoyed having an opportunity to work on that piece."

From the soulful strains of Rachmaninoff to the bombastic theme of 1812, the concert was performed beautifully, showcasing the amazing talents of LHS' best string, wind and solo musicians.

OFFBEAT - PAGE 8

cal because of the game's fast-paced nature, comparing pingpong to other racket sports like tennis and badminton, the latter of which he also plays.

"You play with muscle memory and reflexes that are built from practicing," said Mendelsohn.

He said his past involvement in baseball and basketball also taught him hand-eye dexterity that helped him improve his pingpong game.

While pingpong requires physical adroitness, it demands equal mental prowess.

"Pingpong is as much a strategy game as it is a sport," Mendelsohn said. "[A player] make[s] a plan and exploit[s] holes in the opponent's plan."

The combination of coordination and calculation can lead to lightning-speed rallies between opponents.

"The thrill you get when you have an amazing rally" makes pingpong a rewarding sport to play, he said.

In action, Mendelsohn was described by co-president senior Jeremy Smith as "agile, composed and calculating," making him "more than worthy as an opponent" to play against.

Despite his intensity during the game, however, the Ping Pong Club meetings Mendelsohn runs are "very relaxed." Members "just [come] to have a good time, improve their playing and talk with friends," he added.

Mendelsohn's words to any pingpong novice reflect his personal philosophy in playing the sport: "Practice, practice, practice, but always remember to have fun."

CORRECTION:

In the article "Facebook Compliments page facilitates positive community interactions" in the last issue, the article was cut off. The last sentence in its entirety is "Lexington students, spurred by the prevalence of hate in online communities, have thus modeled an admirable push for positivity that is more than deserving of its own praise."

Girls' basketball finishes season at states

■ Mark Rosenberg
Staff Writer

The Lexington High School girls basketball team lost to Westford in the Division 1 North quarterfinals of the Massachusetts state tournament, bringing its successful season to a close.

The Minutemen posted a 16-6 record for the season and entered the state tournament ranked sixth among Division 1 North teams.

The girls maintained a high level of play throughout the season. They peaked at third in the Division 1 North rankings and 16th in the overall state rankings, finished second in the Middlesex League and qualified for the state tournament in 11 games, matching the LHS record.

In the first round of the four-round Division 1 North tournament, Lexington defeated 11th-seeded Boston Latin 41-27 behind freshman Anna Kelly's 22 points.

The Minutemen had the rare opportunity to play the tournament game on their home court, supported by a raucous student cheering section.

"Playing in a gym that [was] packed, we had a fan base that girls basketball at LHS hasn't seen in a long time, and we were honored and grateful," said senior captain Kate Powers.

Coach Steven Solly added, "Our fans were unreal...We can have one of the best home crowds in the state [next year] if every game is as well attended as the Boston Latin game."

The team led in the third quarter over Boston Latin.

"We were able to wear them down over the course of the game, and I thought we [made] in-game adjustments," said Solly.

However, the Minutemen lost to number three seed Westford 82-44 in the second round of the tournament. Powers scored 14 points for Lexington and senior Kristyn Kajko added 12 more.

The loss at Westford was a disappointment "because it marked the last game for our six graduating seniors, and the end of our great season," said Meredith Bernstein, a sophomore guard.

However, team members were able to see the end of their season positively.

"The bonds that we created during the season were much more important than the scoreboard of any game," said sophomore center Lucy Lang.

Though they lost, the Minutemen relished exceeding the expectations placed on them by high school basketball pundits at the beginning of the season.

Said Bernstein, "We loved playing the underdog role and surprising people."

Solly was impressed by the team's positive attitude.

"This group of girls found a way to be intrinsically motivated every day, and that doesn't always happen."

He added that the senior leadership created an atmosphere for success.

"[The seniors] will always have a special place in my heart," he said.

As Powers moves on from her LHS basketball career, she feels she is walking away as a better teammate and a more confident leader.

She said she is "considering playing college ball, but... playing for anyone other than Coach Solly, and playing with anyone other than the teammates I have come to know and love, will be a challenge for me."

> "We had a fan base that girls basketball at LHS hasn't seen in a long time, and we were honored and grateful."
>
> Meredith Bernstein, sophomore

Students organize swim-a-thon in support of cancer research

■ Kristin Tissera
Staff Writer

On March 10, 70 swimmers of all ages from Lexington and surrounding towns gathered at Minuteman Regional High School to fundraise in the third annual Lexington Youth Against Cancer Swim-a-Thon. Over 20,000 dollars went to the Jimmy Fund, to support Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

As swimmers were welcomed by a board of student volunteers, they were given a goodie bag containing a blank white swim cap and asked to write down whom they were "swimming for" on this cap. Written on the caps were everything from "My Grandmother" to "My Best Friend."

The swim-a-thon tradition was initiated by LHS graduates Lily Hochman and Lauren Jackson, whose grandmother and mother, respectively, were affected by cancer.

Hochman's mother, Tricia Bradley, said that as young children, the girls felt as though they couldn't help, so when they were high school students, they decided to organize a fun and healthy way for children to raise money to donate towards cancer research.

After Hochman and Jackson graduated, Hochman's brother, Carter, a sophomore, and Caitlin Hughes, a senior and captain of the LHS girls swim team, took over.

The event took most of the year to prepare for, said Carter Hochman. A large portion of the preceding months was used to recruit swimmers and gather community sponsors.

"Minuteman donates the space, and most of the equipment is also donated," added Tricia Bradley, the Hochmans' mother and adult coordinator of the event.

Many local businesses, including Sweet Beads and Wilson Farms, donated gift cards and other items to a silent auction, while several LHS a cappella groups and other student performers provided entertainment throughout the day.

The town's fire and police departments also joined the cause. For the second time in the event's history, the Lexington firemen and policemen faced off in a kickboard race.

"The firemen came in wishing to defend their title from last year, and they did," said state senator Kenneth Donelly, a former Lexington fireman, as the firemen were crowned with leis.

With many community members coming together to rally against cancer, Michael Amirault, a junior who swam, said the swim-a-thon was "an awesome event for a great cause."

Volleyball tourney fosters friendly, fierce competition

■ Annie Ma
Staff Writer

March 13 marked the opening day of the Lexington High School intramural volleyball tournament. That afternoon, different teams decked out in matching colors and shirts poured into the gym to prepare for the games.

The tournament has been a tradition for the last 10 years. Jason Rajotte, the P.E. teacher who oversaw the event, said the original idea for the tournament was to get the student body together and have fun in between sports seasons.

"It's a good chance to show off your skills," said Matt Liberman, a sophomore who participated in the tournament. "Anyone can make a team, and you don't have to be good in order to play."

There was tremendous interest in the tournament. Out of the 25 teams that originally signed up, there was only enough room for 16 teams to play.

As the teams began their first round of the tournament, shouts of excitement rang across the school gymnasium and adrenaline pumped as music was blasted through the speakers.

The tournament came to an end on March 15. Two teams, "Su Pa Smash Bros" and "When I'm Nigel," battled for the championship. Captain Evan Zhang, a senior, led "Su Pa Smash Bros" to victory, defeating "When I'm Nigel" 25-21 and 25-21 in two games. The winning team consisted of Zhang, sophomore Justin Kim, juniors Muriel Lavallee, Hugh O'Neil and Kevin Song, seniors Eric Chiang, Tom Jeon, Noah Parker and Jimmy Xia.

Offbeat Athlete: Mendelsohn hones table tennis skills

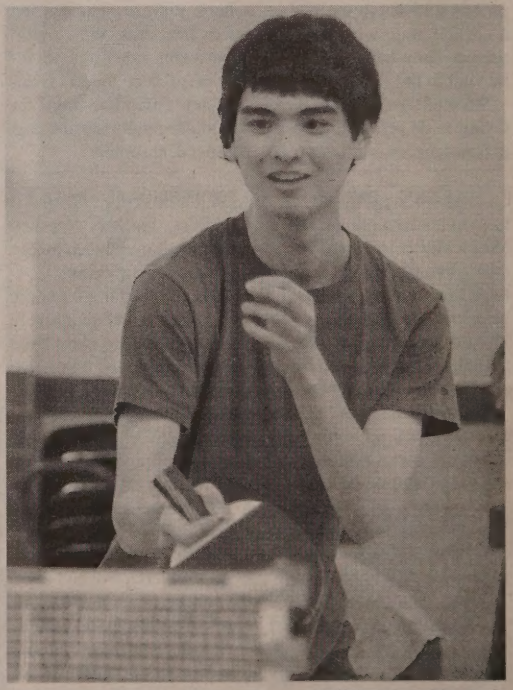
■ Anisa Haque
Staff Writer

Among the spectrum of athletic activities Lexington High School students engage in is the often overlooked sport of table tennis, better known as pingpong. LHS may not boast an official team, but students years ago created a club to rally away and serve up some fun. The excitement continues to flourish this year under the leadership of senior Michael Mendelsohn.

Mendelsohn, who said his older brother sparked his interest in the sport, started playing four years ago. Since then, he has practiced for two hours every week, honing both the motor and mental skills necessary to master the game.

Mendelsohn stressed that hand-eye coordination is criti-

[OFFBEAT, page 7]



Staff photo by Adrian Ayala

Michael Mendelsohn, a senior and co-president of the Ping Pong Club, plays a game during the club meeting on Friday afternoons.